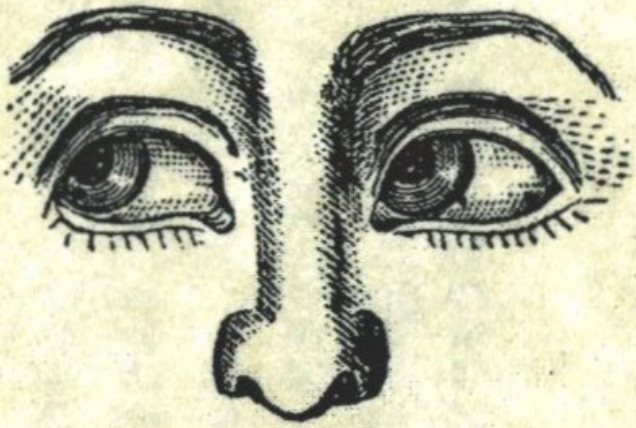
Ladyfinger #91

Why Eye Contact?
Seeing Difference



Morgan Stern

Why eye contact?

Why does it have to matter so much? Why is it so hard? Is the answer made of boring, embarrassing, obvious things, like everything seems to be at its end? Things like childhood, shame, and pain? Yes, but only a little bit.

Damn! Only a few sentences in, and I've already used the word "everything." Forget I did, because I need to use it again, and better.

In all realms, in all processes,
everything is made in the between.

Things observed closely enough
have no center and no essence.
Their middle is within a boundary,
and their being is at one end of a relation.

Eye contact creates a between.
It is unmitigated, unmanaged, and unpredictable. Except for one predictable result: disappointment. Because it's a fount of potential that always merely floods.

It's other people, by the way. It's other people's problem. They're who can't look me in the eye. They're ashamed of the whys of things that they do. Defensive of their self-concept, angry at understandings, hateful toward informedness. Autism is a disability that makes everyone have trouble making eye contact with me.

You have to break eye contact if you want to refuse to communicate. If they didn't, answers to whys would leak out. Farts with enough diction to say "It's all made up."

Names are the eye contact of words. These are difficult for me, but not them, which I guess makes the claim metaphor instead of equivalence.

Have you heard of Ishi? He was Yahi (last one,) and Ishi was Yahi for "man," because he was a man. He lived his last years out, gentle and generous, in a museum. He was smart. He taught his whole language to them, except his name.

Where names reduce the human holograph
to an utterable profanity,
eye contact traps it in a mirrored box.
We erupt, all feathers.

After the encounter, our drained holy
dignity pools into (again) a wet
disappointment. Embarrassingly simple
understandings, two of them.

1. We lost
2. We are different.

"Things are hard because we are different." No, this is not all the more profound for its simplicity. For its elusiveness it is shittier. "Just leave people," the slippery lessons conclude.

Before the museum, Ishi had the landscape to himself for a while. I hope it's okay to imagine it. I think I would have felt sad for a day, relieved for a day, alone for a day. Then no more because alone, there is soon no one left to be alone. Just a madness toward becoming again. Seeking a pair of eyes to be reflected in.
A difference where to wake.

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Morgan Stern
signal @ morganstern.33
@proton.me
ladyfingerpress
r/
tumblr.com/